

IDAHO EMPLOYMENT

A monthly newsletter of Idaho Commerce & Labor

IDAHO
COMMERCE & LABOR

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State Overview

IDAHO'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HITS RECORD LOW

Idaho's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September was 3.3 percent, unchanged from August and just a tenth of a point above the state's record low set in March. The rate remains below the year ago level of 3.7 percent and continued the historic streak of 17 straight months of unemployment rates below 4 percent. Idaho's rate was also below the national rate of 4.6 percent, which decreased from 4.7 percent in August.

Over 2,800 more workers were on the job in September, boosting the total number of people working to a record 737,300. This growth followed an increase of 5,500 in August. It was also the 20th month in a row that more than 700,000 people had been working throughout the state.

The influx of jobs was nearly large enough to again meet the demand. There were fewer than 200 additional people unemployed in September following a dramatic drop of over 2,200 in the number of unemployed in August. During the last two weeks of September and the first week of October, unemployment insurance benefit payments dropped below \$1 million a week for the first time since October 2000.

The labor force reached 762,800, breaking the old record of 762,000 set in March. Idaho's labor force has exceeded 700,000 since April 2004, the

Continued on page 2

Remembering Greg Rogers

The staff of Idaho Commerce & Labor mourns the loss of colleague and friend, Greg Rogers. He died Nov. 10 at his home in Hazelton after a short illness. He was 47 years old.

As the agency's regional economist for south central Idaho since 1999, his articles have appeared in this newsletter every month, providing insightful economic analyses of the area he supported with passion and dedication.

"Our hearts go out to Greg's wife, Peggy, and family," said Idaho Commerce & Labor Director, Roger B. Madsen. "Greg Rogers touched many lives. He was greatly respected, he loved Idaho and he cared deeply about the people in the Magic Valley. He was an expert on the area economy, a consummate professional and very passionate about his work."



Greg Rogers, right, and Idaho Second District U.S. Congressman Mike Simpson share a moment at the Magic Valley Commerce & Labor office.

Colleagues at the department and other peers in the Magic Valley area used the terms "champion, advocate, asset and friend" to describe the man

who helped bring businesses and jobs to the region.

"Greg helped bring hundreds of new jobs to the Magic Valley and Mini-Cassia areas," Madsen said. "Thanks to his efforts, a lot of people have jobs with higher wages today than they did before. He will be greatly missed."

Rogers, an Eden native, worked as a banker for 10 years in northern Idaho before becoming an analyst for what was then called Job Service in 1999. He was a graduate of the College of Southern Idaho and had a master's degree in business administration from the University of Idaho.

There will be no article about south central Idaho this month. The labor force data for the area is on page 17.

30th straight month that over 700,000 people have been working or looking for jobs.

The number of people employed during the last year increased by 21,100, nearly 3 percent. Nationally, employment increased by over 2.6 million between September 2005 and September 2006, an increase of 1.9 percent. While the number of persons unemployed decreased 9.5 percent nationally, for that same period Idaho's unemployed decreased 10.5 percent.

AREA AND COUNTY LABOR FORCE DEVELOPMENTS

Unlike August, there were no counties with double-digit unemployment rates. Power County's rate dropped from 10.8 percent to 4.3 percent when workers at the food processing plant in American Falls went back to work in September. Only five rural counties reported unemployment rates of 7 percent or more. Clearwater reported the highest rate at 9.7 percent. A year ago, seven posted jobless rates of 7 percent or higher but none was in double digits.

The county unemployment rate in September was 1.8 percent in Madison County. Fourteen additional counties reported rates of 3 percent or less ranging from 3 percent in Twin Falls to 2.3 percent in Bonnevile. One year ago there were 10 counties at 3 percent or below.

The highest unemployment rate among the state's Labor Market Areas occurred in the Grangeville Small Labor Market Area at 6 percent followed by the Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area at 4.8 percent. The Rexburg Micropolitan Statistical Area at 2.1 percent and the Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area at 2.3 percent had the lowest unemployment rates. The Boise metropolitan area unemployment rate was 2.8 percent.

SEASONAL ADJUSTMENTS

Why do we focus on seasonally adjusted data when analyzing employment? Data is seasonally adjusted so that economic trends are not overshadowed or obscured by other movements in the data.

Over one year, the size of the labor force and the levels of employment and unemployment exhibit sharp movements up and down because of seasonal events such as changes in the weather, major holidays, reduced or expanded industrial production, harvests and the opening and closing of schools. Some specific examples are increases in retail sales each December during the Christmas shopping season, declines in construction activity during the winter months and expansion in the labor force each June when schools close and many youth enter the labor market in search of jobs.

Often these seasonal fluctuations are large enough to overshadow other movements in the data. Typically, more than 90 percent of the monthly variation in the unemployment level results from seasonal conditions. Because these events more or less follow a regular pattern each year, their influence on the more important, longer-term trends in the data can be eliminated by adjusting the statistics over the year.

Seasonal adjustment is a statistical tool that attempts to filter out seasonal fluctuations in a time series. Once the seasonal component has been removed, the series is said to be seasonally adjusted and nonseasonal developments such as cyclical swings in economic activity are easier to observe. Without using seasonally adjusted data, changes from one month to the next can only be compared to

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changes between the same months in other years. January to February changes could not be compared with June to July changes because of the varying influence that weather, seasonal layoffs, school closures and other factors have on employment. These cause predictable, but significant, changes in employment which make it difficult to make accurate comparisons over time, such as for a six-month period or an entire business cycle. Using seasonally adjusted data when analyzing labor market statistics is very important because without such data, it would be extremely difficult to determine how much variation in a data series was a result of actual changes in the underlying economic conditions. Additionally, it is crucially important that economic policy makers, who use employment and unemployment statistics as a guide to the health of the economy, get information, which can be compared directly from one month to the next so they can accurately follow trends in the labor market and implement appropriate economic policies. Seasonally adjusted data allows comparison between Idaho and the nation and among the counties because it allows the analysis of the labor force data to be based on economic trends.

NONFARM PAYROLL JOBS

Idaho added 5,600 nonfarm jobs in September, bringing the total to 653,700, an increase of 0.9 percent. The growth from September 2005 was 4 percent or 25,400 jobs over the past 12 months. Nationally, the job growth was 1.3 percent.

State and local government experienced the largest growth from August with 8,400 new jobs as the new school year got under way. Slightly over 64 percent of those jobs, about 5,400, were in local public education. Education at the state level added 3,000 jobs while private education added 1,400.

That was more than enough to offset declines in durable manufacturing, construction and the hospitality sectors.

Industries that continue to report strong job growth over the year include construction, leisure and hospitality, retail stores, health care and administrative and support services, particularly customer service centers and temporary employment agencies. Job growth across most of the remaining industries is further indication of Idaho's economic stability.

Perhaps the biggest story is in the construction sector. Although 500 jobs were lost from August to September due to seasonal factors, there have been 7,900 new jobs added since September 2005. This year has by far experienced the largest job increase in the construction sector. The job decline from August to September was the first since January as construction has remained remarkably strong throughout 2006. The

State Table 1: September 2006 Labor Force (preliminary)				
Seasonally Adjusted	Labor Force	Unemp.	% Unemp.	Total Emp.
Lewiston MSA	28,800	1,386	4.8	27,414
Nez Perce County	18,839	815	4.3	18,023
Asotin County, WA	9,961	571	5.7	9,390
Boise City-Nampa MSA	297,846	8,444	2.8	289,403
Ada County	198,216	5,060	2.6	193,157
Boise County	4,079	114	2.8	3,965
Canyon County	82,907	2,850	3.4	80,056
Gem County	7,588	282	3.7	7,306
Owyhee County	5,057	139	2.7	4,918
Pocatello MSA	46,183	1,704	3.7	44,478
Bannock County	42,574	1,548	3.6	41,026
Power County	3,609	157	4.3	3,452
Idaho Falls MSA	60,945	1,429	2.3	59,516
Bonneville County	49,964	1,159	2.3	48,805
Jefferson County	10,981	270	2.5	10,711
Coeur d'Alene MSA*	69,590	2,391	3.4	67,200
Burley MicSA	20,686	764	3.7	19,921
Cassia County	10,652	369	3.5	10,283
Minidoka County	10,034	396	3.9	9,638
Rexburg MicSA	20,521	437	2.1	20,084
Fremont County	5,699	174	3.0	5,526
Madison County	14,821	264	1.8	14,558
Twin Falls MicSA	51,041	1,547	3.0	49,495
Jerome County	10,792	305	2.8	10,487
Twin Falls County	40,249	1,242	3.1	39,008
Grangeville SLMA	9,107	549	6.0	8,558
Idaho County	7,302	478	6.5	6,825
Lewis County	1,805	72	4.0	1,733
Hailey SLMA	15,378	459	3.0	14,919
Blaine County	14,754	430	2.9	14,324
Camas County	624	29	4.7	595
Adams County	2,089	150	7.2	1,938
Bear Lake County	3,191	94	3.0	3,096
Benewah County	4,211	354	8.4	3,857
Blackfoot MicSA (Bingham County)	21,715	631	2.9	21,084
Bonner County	21,555	917	4.3	20,638
Boundary County	4,193	357	8.5	3,837
Butte County	1,216	48	3.9	1,168
Caribou County	3,384	141	4.2	3,243
Clark County	510	22	4.4	487
Clearwater County	3,449	335	9.7	3,114
Custer County	2,715	101	3.7	2,614
Mountain Home MicSA (Elmore County)	11,285	554	4.9	10,730
Franklin County	6,462	177	2.7	6,285
Gooding County	9,032	250	2.8	8,782
Moscow MicSA (Latah County)	17,366	729	4.2	16,637
Lemhi County	4,392	222	5.0	4,170
Lincoln County	2,711	107	4.0	2,604
Oneida County	2,456	61	2.5	2,395
Payette County	10,094	630	6.2	9,464
Shoshone County	5,927	463	7.8	5,464
Teton County	4,520	108	2.4	4,412
Valley County	5,175	205	4.0	4,970
Washington County	5,103	270	5.3	4,833
State of Idaho	762,793	25,466	3.3	737,327
Idaho Cities				
Boise	125,321	3,469	2.8	121,853
Caldwell	22,206	776	3.5	21,430
Coeur d'Alene	30,713	774	2.5	29,939
Idaho Falls	15,603	652	4.2	14,951
Lewiston	32,128	1,213	3.8	30,915
Meridian	29,120	923	3.2	28,198
Nampa	21,055	663	3.1	20,392
Pocatello	21,760	396	1.8	21,364
Twin Falls	15,318	577	3.8	14,741

* Coeur d'Alene MSA includes all of Kootenai County.

number of jobs historically has declined between August and September until 2003, when an increase of 250 was posted. By September 2004 the number of new jobs was up 3,300, and a year later the increase was 6,200, setting the stage for even greater growth in 2006. Population growth, low interest rates, commercial developments and infrastructure improvements and repairs have been the catalysts.

Leisure and hospitality placed employment in the accommodations and food service sectors at 63,500, up 3,300 from one year earlier. Most of these new jobs were in recreation — golf courses and fitness centers. Nearly all of the other 1,200 new jobs were in food service and at bars and lounges. As consumers feel more confident about the economy, they frequent restaurants or fast food establishments. People often eat out to relieve the stress in their life.

Retail trade experienced its first job loss since February in September with a decline of 300. Between January and February, the number of retail jobs dropped following a busy holiday shopping season. However, since September 2005 over 1,900 jobs have been added. The largest increase was in general merchandise stores which includes not only large department stores like Macy's but retail outlets like Shopko, Fred Meyer and Target. Building material stores and motor vehicle dealers continue to show strong growth over the year. It is anticipated the number of retail trade jobs will increase in October as several major chain stores open in Canyon County and others gear up for the holiday season.

Other areas of significant growth include administrative and support services, which lost 500 jobs from August to September but was still 1,900 jobs ahead of September 2005. Once again seasonal layoffs were responsible for the month-over-month decrease. This time the job losses were in services to buildings including janitorial services, landscaping, carpet cleaning and extermination services. The growth over the year was due to the expansion of customer service centers across the state as well as temporary employment agencies.

Nearly 63,000 jobs in health care and social assistance were reported in September. Over half of the 2,100 new jobs added in the past 12 months were in ambulatory health care services such as doctors' offices, outpatient care centers and laboratories and home health care. The remaining jobs were primarily in hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities.

Financial activities added 2,000 new jobs since September 2005, bringing the total to 32,400. The additional jobs were split among banks and other credit institutions and insurance carriers. The continuing con-

struction boom is also having a positive impact on these sectors.

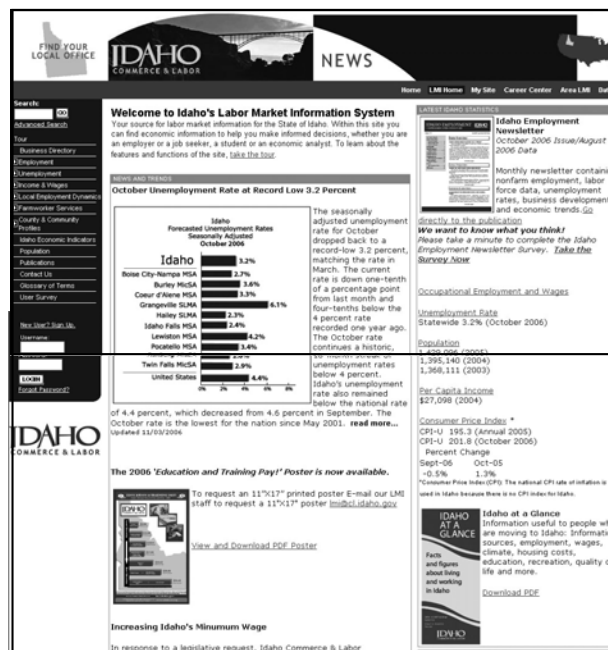
The outlook for the remainder of 2006 remains very positive. The not-so-positive news is that since 1991 the number of jobs has decreased from September to October every year with the exception of 1992 and 1993. This activity is expected because of seasonal decreases in construction, food manufacturing, temporary employment agencies, recreation activities and local government administration. The good news is that the number of jobs from one year ago has increased every year for the past 14 years. Job activity has been normal this year so a slight drop is expected from September but the number will exceed October 2005.

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WEB SITE PACKED WITH LABOR MARKET RESOURCES

Idaho's Labor Market Information Web site — <http://lmi.idaho.gov> — is a key source for economic information about Idaho and how it compares to the U.S. on a variety of topics. The Web site has proven essential to businesses, students, job seekers, economic analysts and others. Find out for yourself.

Below is pictured the Web site home page.



State Table 4: Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

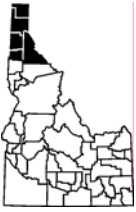
	% Change From				
BY PLACE OF WORK	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	Last Month	Last Year
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	653,700	648,100	628,300	0.9	4.0
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	126,800	127,600	117,900	-0.6	7.5
Natural Resources & Mining	4,700	4,700	4,800	0.0	-2.1
Logging	2,000	2,000	2,300	0.0	-13.0
Mining	2,700	2,700	2,500	0.0	8.0
Metal Ore Mining	700	800	800	-12.5	-12.5
Construction	57,000	57,500	49,100	-0.9	16.1
Manufacturing	65,100	65,400	64,000	-0.5	1.7
Durable Goods	41,600	42,000	40,700	-1.0	2.2
Wood Product Manufacturing	8,300	8,300	7,900	0.0	5.1
Sawmills & Wood Preservation	2,600	2,600	2,700	0.0	-3.7
Veneer & Engineered Products	2,000	2,100	1,600	-4.8	25.0
Other Wood Product Manufacturing	3,700	3,600	3,600	2.8	2.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	4,300	4,300	4,000	0.0	7.5
Machinery Manufacturing	2,700	2,700	2,600	0.0	3.8
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	16,400	16,400	16,000	0.0	2.5
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	3,000	3,000	3,000	0.0	0.0
Other Durable Goods	6,900	7,300	7,200	-5.5	-4.2
Nondurable Goods	23,500	23,400	23,300	0.4	0.9
Food Manufacturing	14,900	14,800	15,100	0.7	-1.3
Fruits & Vegetable Preserving & Specialty	7,400	7,500	7,600	-1.3	-2.6
Paper Manufacturing	1,500	1,600	1,600	-6.3	-6.3
Printing & Related Support Activities	1,800	1,900	1,900	-5.3	-5.3
Chemical Manufacturing	2,100	1,900	1,900	10.5	10.5
Other Nondurable Goods	3,200	3,200	2,800	0.0	14.3
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	526,900	520,500	510,400	1.2	3.2
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	128,900	129,000	125,500	-0.1	2.7
Trade	108,500	108,500	105,700	0.0	2.6
Wholesale Trade	28,400	28,100	27,500	1.1	3.3
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	13,200	13,300	12,600	-0.8	4.8
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	12,300	12,000	12,300	2.5	0.0
Retail Trade	80,100	80,400	78,200	-0.4	2.4
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	12,300	12,400	11,800	-0.8	4.2
Building Material and Garden Equipment	9,900	10,100	9,400	-2.0	5.3
Food & Beverage Stores	12,700	12,700	12,400	0.0	2.4
General Merchandise Stores	16,500	16,500	15,900	0.0	3.8
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	20,400	20,500	19,800	-0.5	3.0
Utilities	2,000	2,100	2,000	-4.8	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	18,400	18,400	17,800	0.0	3.4
Rail Transportation	1,300	1,300	1,100	0.0	18.2
Truck Transportation	9,600	9,500	9,000	1.1	6.7
Information	11,500	11,500	11,100	0.0	3.6
Telecommunications	4,700	4,700	4,700	0.0	0.0
Financial Activities	32,400	32,500	30,400	-0.3	6.6
Finance & Insurance	23,500	23,500	22,000	0.0	6.8
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	8,900	9,000	8,400	-1.1	6.0
Professional & Business Services	83,500	84,200	79,700	-0.8	4.8
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	31,700	31,800	30,900	-0.3	2.6
Scientific Research & Development	7,300	7,300	7,600	0.0	-3.9
Management of Companies & Enterprises	8,100	8,200	7,800	-1.2	3.8
Administrative & Support & Waste Management	43,700	44,200	41,000	-1.1	6.6
Administrative & Support Services	41,500	42,000	39,600	-1.2	4.8
Educational & Health Services	71,100	70,000	68,900	1.6	3.2
Educational Services	8,200	6,800	8,100	20.6	1.2
Health Care & Social Assistance	62,900	63,200	60,800	-0.5	3.5
Hospitals	13,700	13,900	13,100	-1.4	4.6
Leisure & Hospitality	63,500	65,200	60,200	-2.6	5.5
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	10,800	11,500	8,700	-6.1	24.1
Accommodation & Food Services	52,700	53,700	51,500	-1.9	2.3
Accommodation	8,800	9,400	8,700	-6.4	1.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	43,900	44,300	42,800	-0.9	2.6
Other Services	19,800	19,700	18,500	0.5	7.0
Total Government	116,200	108,400	116,100	7.2	0.1
Federal Government	13,400	14,000	13,800	-4.3	-2.9
State & Local Government	102,800	94,400	102,300	8.9	0.5
State Government	29,800	26,800	29,600	11.2	0.7
State Government Education	14,100	11,100	14,100	27.0	0.0
State Government Administration	15,700	15,700	15,500	0.0	1.3
Local Government	73,000	67,600	72,700	8.0	0.4
Local Government Education	37,300	31,900	36,600	16.9	1.9
Local Government Administration	32,500	32,500	33,000	0.0	-1.5
Local Government Tribes	3,200	3,200	3,100	0.0	3.2

*Preliminary Estimate

** Estimates include all full or part time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay in the following industry groups during the pay period ending nearest the 12th of the month.

State Table 5: Economic Indicators

	Sep 2006	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE ⁽¹⁾					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	762,800	759,800	743,300	0.4	2.6
Unemployment	25,500	25,300	27,100	0.8	-5.9
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	3.3	3.6		
Total Employment	737,300	734,500	716,200	0.4	2.9
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	761,500	764,500	739,300	-0.4	3.0
Unemployment	20,500	22,500	22,000	-8.9	-6.8
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	2.7	2.9	3.0		
Total Employment	741,000	742,000	717,300	-0.1	3.3
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ⁽²⁾					
	4.6	4.7	5.1		
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ⁽²⁾					
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	198.4	199.6	195.0	-0.6	1.7
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	202.9	203.9	198.8	-0.5	2.1
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture Employment	49,200	49,710	45,840	-1.0	7.3
Operators	9,740	9,740	9,740	0.0	0.0
Unpaid Family	360	360	360	0.0	0.0
Hired Workers	39,100	39,610	35,740	-1.3	9.4
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
Claims Activities					
Initial Claims ⁽³⁾	3,872	5,012	4,686	-22.7	-17.4
Weeks Claimed ⁽⁴⁾	23,860	32,647	32,058	-26.9	-25.6
Benefit Payment Activities⁽⁵⁾					
Weeks Compensated	18,439	29,374	24,907	-37.2	-26.0
Total Benefit \$ Paid	\$4,180,758	\$6,433,989	\$5,435,793	-35.0	-23.1
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$226.73	\$219.04	\$218.24	3.5	3.9
Covered Employers	48,915	48,934	45,799	0.0	6.8
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months ⁽⁴⁾	\$111,801,739	\$113,409,484	\$133,861,054	-1.4	-16.5
(1) Preliminary Estimate					
(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics					
(3) Includes all entitlements/programs on Intrastate and Interstate Agent, New, and Additional Claims					
(4) Includes all entitlements/programs, Intrastate and Interstate Agent					
(5) Includes all entitlements/programs, Total Liable Activities					



Panhandle News

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Coeur d'Alene Metropolitan Statistical Area, which encompasses all of Kootenai County, remains on a winning streak. Its unemployment rate fell to a record low of 3.4 percent in September, and it added 2,250 nonfarm payroll jobs since September 2005. Every major industrial sector except wood product manufacturing, added jobs over the 12-month period. With profits high, unemployment low and most industries expanding, the economy is exerting considerable upward pressure on wages. Those employers who are not responding to the labor market changes with higher wages may be paying an even higher price in the form of high turnover rates and the resulting loss of productivity and customer focus.

The other Panhandle counties also continue to enjoy job growth. In all four — Benewah, Bonner, Boundary and Shoshone — construction and related industries such as real estate, title insurance, lending, landscaping, architectural and engineering services and building material stores have added a significant number of jobs in the past 12 months. The thriving tourism sector also has been a major source of new employment, and all of the counties have seen their health care sectors add jobs this year.

Each county has unique industries that help it grow. Bonner County is adding manufacturing and corporate headquarters jobs. Shoshone County is enjoying the effect of high silver prices on mining employment while miners, who are receiving large bonuses or sharing profits with their employers, are able to spend more. Boundary County is seeing the return of many of the 300 CEDU/Brown Schools jobs lost in 2005 as Idaho Educational Services gradually reopens those programs for troubled youth. The Coeur d'Alene Tribe continues to add dozens of jobs in Benewah

Panhandle Table 1: Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment
Kootenai County

	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	69,590	68,580	68,020	1.5	2.3
Unemployed	2,390	2,540	2,610	-5.9	-8.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.4%	3.7%	3.8%		
Total Employment	67,200	66,040	65,410	1.8	2.7
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	69,880	69,910	68,030	0.0	2.7
Unemployed	1,870	1,970	2,060	-5.1	-9.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.7%	2.8%	3.0%		
Total Employment	68,010	67,940	65,970	0.1	3.1
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	56,660	56,290	54,410	0.7	4.1
Goods-Producing Industries	11,500	11,490	10,850	0.1	6.0
Natural Resources & Mining	530	520	490	1.9	8.2
Construction	6,280	6,270	5,690	0.2	10.4
Manufacturing	4,690	4,700	4,670	-0.2	0.4
Wood Product Manufacturing	970	990	1,070	-2.0	-9.3
Other Manufacturing	3,720	3,710	3,600	0.3	3.3
Service-Providing Industries	45,160	44,800	43,560	0.8	3.7
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	10,080	10,100	9,850	-0.2	2.3
Wholesale Trade	1,440	1,430	1,380	0.7	4.3
Retail Trade	7,600	7,610	7,390	-0.1	2.8
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	1,040	1,060	1,080	-1.9	-3.7
Information	970	980	1,000	-1.0	-3.0
Financial Activities	2,930	2,940	2,830	-0.3	3.5
Professional & Business Services	6,580	6,550	6,040	0.5	8.9
Educational & Health Services	5,680	5,630	5,440	0.9	4.4
Leisure & Hospitality	7,950	8,470	7,680	-6.1	3.5
Other Services	1,440	1,590	1,470	-9.4	-2.0
Government Education	3,430	2,570	3,370	33.5	1.8
Government Administration	5,360	5,220	5,170	2.7	3.7
Government Tribes	740	750	710	-1.3	4.2

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

County each year as it expands its services to tribal members and other reservation residents. Unfortunately, the two most timber-dependent counties — Benewah and Boundary — have experienced the least growth in the last few years and may soon lose jobs again as lumber prices decline.

Falling lumber prices definitely are the darkest clouds on the Panhandle's horizon. From late 2003 into early 2006, the Panhandle's forest products industry experienced good times. Demand for lumber was high because of near-record U.S. housing starts, and lumber prices rose to high levels, peaking at \$474 per thousand board feet on Aug. 13,

2004. Between late 2003 and early 2006, almost every sawmill in the Panhandle added jobs. The only exception was Stimson Lumber's Atlas mill in Coeur d'Alene, which closed Dec. 31, 2005. Unfortunately, higher mortgage rates have sharply reduced U.S. home construction, and lumber prices have fallen to a 15-year low. On Nov. 10, the Random Lengths composite price for framing lumber fell to \$269 per thousand board feet from \$358 a year earlier. In the last half of 2006, at least five Panhandle sawmills shut down for a few weeks or laid off shifts of workers indefinitely. As a consequence, logging and wood product-related transportation companies have reduced employment in recent months. With further reductions in U.S. housing starts likely to occur, lumber prices may fall even lower, and employment at sawmills could continue to drop.

SPECIAL TOPIC: *Tourists Love Our Year-Round Wonderland*

Another Summer of Job Gains in Tourism

The Panhandle's summer tourist season beat 2005's record with a 7.3 percent increase in lodging receipts — from \$35.9 million to \$38.5 million — according to the Idaho State Tax Commission. All five counties experienced increases in tourist activity from June to September. Bonner County's growth was the most impressive at 12.9 percent. Receipts rose from \$7.4 million in 2005 to \$8.4 million. The large amount of national attention it has received in the last three years most likely explains that growth. Silverwood Theme Park's record-breaking attendance, continued expansion of the Coeur d'Alene Casino at Worley and strong performance by the Coeur d'Alene Resort generated a 6.2 percent increase in Kootenai County receipts from \$25.2 million in 2005 to \$26.8 million this summer.

Wandering Trails

Rails-to-trails projects prove to be great tourist draws. This year, an estimated 100,000 visitors traveled the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, the 79-mile trail from Mullan through the Silver Valley and Harrison to Plummer. The trail is open year-round. Bicyclists enjoy it until the first snowfall. After that, the trail between Mullan and Wallace is used for snowmobiling, and the trail between Wallace and Kellogg and between Smelterville and Cataldo is groomed for hiking and cross-country skiing. The Route of the Hiawatha from Mullan into Montana closed for the winter on Oct. 1. A record number of visitors biked or walked the route, famous for its tunnels and high trestles. About 7,500 bicyclists took the trail. Those tourists benefited many stores, restaurants, motels and art galleries in Harrison and throughout the valley.

Winter Wonderland

By mid-November, it was beginning to look a lot like Christmas in the mountains of the Panhandle, which

means extra dollars for the region's tourism industry. With 30 inches of new snow on top on an existing base, Lookout Pass Ski Area opened Nov. 16. Located along Interstate 90 near the Idaho-Montana border, Lookout usually is the first ski area in the Inland Northwest to open. It employs more than 50 people during ski season. This year, Silver Mountain Resort in Kellogg and Schweitzer Mountain Resort near Sandpoint were not far behind, opening by Thanksgiving weekend. Early openings mean extra paydays for the 200 people who work at Silver Mountain and its gondola and the 600 people who work at Schweitzer during ski season. They also bring extra dollars to hotels, restaurants, tourist shops and other retailers.

Because many businesses in western Bonner County rely on snowmobiling trails to attract winter visitors, they were crushed by a September court order prohibiting all snowmobiling in a 300,000-acre area extending from Priest Lake north to the Canadian border. Especially hard hit were Priest Lake restaurants and lodging operations. U.S. District Court Judge Robert Whaley made the ruling to guarantee that woodland caribou receive the protection required by the Endangered Species Act. Environmentalists won the order in their ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Those groups want the federal agencies to protect a band of 35 woodland caribou that roam from the Priest Lake area north into Canada. The band is the only caribou that still live in the lower 48 states. The environmental groups argue that snowmobile noise not only harasses caribou, affecting their ability to acquire food during a time when calories are scarce, but also compacts snow trails making it easier for cougars to access calving grounds. After the September ruling, environmentalists and snowmobile advocates worked out a joint proposal that would allow many snowmobiling trails to remain open while still not disturbing the caribou. In November, the judge issued a court order upholding the proposal to the delight of snowmobilers and the businesses that rely on them.

SPECIAL TOPIC: The Post Falls Jobs Machine

While "location, location, location" is a mantra in real estate, it is equally important in economic development. Post Falls proves the point. The city lies between the metropolis of Spokane, with a population of 197,000, and the tourist Mecca of Coeur d'Alene, with a population of 41,000, and benefits from growth on both sides of the border. With its location along Interstate 90, great rail service, proximity to Spokane's airport and relatively inexpensive land, Post Falls has proven attractive to businesses and residential developments. The number of businesses in Post Falls rose 36 percent from 685 in 2000 to 930 today while the number of jobs grew 44 percent from 7,300 to 10,600. It's not surprising the

city's population grew from 7,349 in 1990 to 17,247 by 2000 and exceeds 24,000 today.

This month's news shows that much more growth is in store for Post Falls.

Idaho Wins Cabela's and a Whole Lot More

Idahoans learned in November that Cabela's had selected their side of the border to build a new sporting goods store over a bid from Spokane County. The Cabela's overlooking the Spokane River in Post Falls will be considerably larger than the one that opened in Boise earlier this year. The store will feature aquariums stocked with native fish, a trout pond, a world-class gun library, an indoor archery range, museum-quality displays of stuffed animals along a rushing stream and a deli serving wild game sandwiches. The Boise and Post Falls stores, and a store scheduled to open next fall near Olympia, will be the only three Cabela's stores in the Pacific Northwest, and the Post Falls store is expected to attract visitors from not only the Inland Northwest but the Tri-Cities, Canada and Montana. The Post Falls Cabela's could open as early as next fall and is expected to employ 250 people.

Cabela's will anchor The Pointe at Post Falls, a 200-plus-acre development with about 800,000 square feet of retail space and plans for three other large stores. The developer, Foursquare Properties Inc., says possible tenants include a department store, a discount outlet and retailers focused on clothing, home improvement, kids' fashions, books and furniture. Restaurants and hotels also are likely to be interested in locating near Cabela's, which will be the first store to open at The Pointe at Post Falls.

High-Tech Firm Chooses Idaho

Biopol Laboratory Inc. plans to move from Spokane to Post Falls after it constructs a 45,000-square-foot facility at the Riverbend Commerce Park. The company currently leases six small buildings in two different areas of Spokane. Together, the six buildings are smaller than the Riverbend facility.

Biopol operates a 640-acre farm in Plummer, where it grows a variety of grasses and other plants that cause allergies. Biopol harvests the pollen and processes nearly 800 different allergens — mainly plant pollens but also dust mites, mold and yeast — for use in allergy vaccines. Biopol, founded in Spokane in 1976, is a subsidiary of ALK-Abello, a Danish company with 1,500 employees worldwide. Biopol currently employs 24 people and expects to grow to 35 or 50 employees within five years. It plans to move into its new building in late 2008 or early 2009.

Steve Griffiths of Jobs Plus called Biopol's decision great economic development news. Bringing a multina-

tional biotechnical company to Riverbend, which also is home to the University of Idaho Research Park, affirms the county's potential as a great location for high-tech businesses.

Developing a Powerful Health Care Lineup

Ten years ago Post Falls had fewer than 100 health-care jobs. By 2000, it had 320. Following the opening of two specialty hospitals and several medical clinics and offices, it now claims nearly 900, and at least 300 more health-care jobs will be created in the next two years.

Kootenai Medical Center, the community hospital based in Coeur d'Alene, recently announced that it will build a 6,500-square-foot satellite cancer center next to its medical clinic in Post Falls. The \$3 million construction project will start in the fall of 2007. Rapid population growth, an aging population and the ability to keep cancer victims alive much longer all have contributed to the need for the medical center to expand its cancer services. This fall, the hospital opened its first satellite cancer center in Sandpoint.

Medicare patients at Northern Idaho Advanced Care Hospital in Post Falls are now allowed to stay for an average of 25 days thanks to a new federal certification. Up to now, Medicare would only pay for a five-day stay at the long-term acute-care hospital, which opened in February. The certification will allow the hospital to reach full capacity by early 2007. The 40-bed facility currently employs 90 people and expects to employ 200 workers by early next year.

Life Care Centers broke ground Oct. 27 on a \$40 million campus west of Wal-Mart in Post Falls. The Life Care campus will include a 120-bed nursing center, a 104-unit assisted living center and a 153-unit independent living apartment complex — a total of 320,000 square feet. About 150 people will work at the campus when construction is completed in early 2008.

Guardian Angel Homes LLC, established seven years ago in Post Falls, currently is building a \$4 million, 40-unit assisted-living facility next to a 60-unit assisted-living complex that it already operates in Post Falls. The facility, which will be called Legacy House, should open in June.

Large Development has Potential to Transform Downtown

Harrison Dock Builders began work in September on a marina for The Landing at Post Falls, a 34-acre mixed-use development on the north bank of the Spokane River in Post Falls. The site will include 142 boat slips, a 1,000-foot-long perimeter dock and a floating convenience store with a full-service gas station for boats. Construction should be completed in December. The first two condominium buildings — with 20 units each —

were recently completed. Next comes construction of a 47-unit condo building atop a four-story garage. Eventually, The Landing at Post Falls will include 120,000 square feet of retail space, 260,000 square feet of office space, 530 condo units and an amphitheater.

More Places to Shop and Eat

Rapid population growth and increasing tourism activity are fueling retail growth in Post Falls.

Tenants are beginning to fill River City Center, a new mini-mall at Idaho Highway 41 and Mullan Road. Anytime Fitness took a 4,200-square-foot space for its wide range of fitness equipment and on-site trainers. Occupying 1,600 square feet next door is Pro Cuts, a men's hair salon that features televised sports at each styling station and a sports memorabilia store. Another tenant popular with sports fans is Paddy's Too, a 160-seat sports bar and restaurant with seven pool tables and five plasma televisions. It serves lunch, dinner, wine, beer and liquor every day and breakfast on the weekends, and it employs about 40 people. A new 1,750-square-foot Pita Pit drive-in restaurant — offering healthy fast food — employs 20 people. With the first mini-mall nearly full, construction has begun on a second next door.

Tom and Teresa Capone just cloned their popular Capone's Pub & Grill in Coeur d'Alene, opening a 3,800-square-foot bar and restaurant in Post Falls that looks like the Coeur d'Alene original. The new Capone's also serves sandwiches, pizza, beer and liquor. It employs 20 people.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Benewah County

- An important day for jobs creation occurred Oct. 7 in Benewah County, because that day Kim Schwanz's job became full-time. Schwanz has provided economic development assistance to Benewah County as the part-time executive director of Timber Plus. A \$25,000 grant from Idaho Commerce & Labor will pay half of his salary. He is one of more than a dozen economic development specialists operating in rural areas throughout Idaho with state support. Now Schwanz can focus his full energies on increasing tourism, recruiting new businesses to the county, helping existing businesses expand and identifying and reducing obstacles to economic development such as inadequate infrastructure, the scarcity of affordable housing, planning and zoning issues and work force training problems.
- Tommy Dillon, who has years of experience in pizza restaurants, recently opened Tommy's Pizza at the St. Maries Bowl. With its Italian décor, the restau-

rant offers a warm ambiance and an amazing variety of pizzas with 13 different kinds of sauces.

- Chuck Taggart recently opened the Key Club Lodge, a café and membership club with a hunting theme, in Fernwood. Members receive a key that allows them to park their RVs in the lot and 24-hour access to the lodge including a meat locker where they can hang their game. Members also can shower and wash clothes in the back room, where they also can post pictures of their quarry. A game room provides a big screen television. The café opens at 4 a.m. to cater to hunters and loggers but serves the general public as well as lodge members, offering breakfast and burgers throughout the day.
- Mary and Bob Aldrich recently opened Northwood Custom Framing in St. Maries. It's the only framing shop in a 50-mile radius.

Bonner County

- The Bonner County Economic Development Corp. recently named Quest Aircraft Co. its business of the year, citing the company's 82 percent job growth between October 2005 and October 2006. This year, Quest migrated from developing prototypes to manufacturing the Kodiak, a hardy 10-seat, single-engine turboprop airplane that can handle relatively short runways and provide easy landings even in remote jungles. Dave Voetmann and Tom Hamilton founded Quest in 1998 after discussing the need for a low-maintenance plane to transport missionaries and humanitarian aid workers to primitive airstrips. In October 2002, Quest moved into a 27,000-square-foot facility at the Sandpoint Airport, where it employed 35 workers to develop prototypes. In October 2005, Quest completed a 51,000-square-foot expansion so it would be ready for full-scale production of the Kodiak. Today, Quest employs about 100 people. The first Kodiak will roll off the line in a few weeks. Besides missionaries and humanitarian aid workers, bush pilots, airplane hobbyists and corporations have shown interest in the Kodiak.
- After years of high vacancy rates, the 194,000-square-foot Bonner Mall in Ponderay is enjoying its highest level of activity since 1994. Sears recently remodeled and doubled its size, and the entire mall will soon get a facelift. Yoke's grocery store, a long-time anchor, plans a \$3 million renovation. This fall, North Idaho College moved its branch from downtown Sandpoint to the mall because it needed more space and parking. Other tenants that opened in the mall this year include Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Co., a retail clothing outlet and an arcade.

There are currently 31 businesses and the Sandpoint branch of North Idaho College at the mall and its perimeter area. Only five spaces remain vacant, and several potential tenants have approached mall managers about them.

- Glacier Prosthetic and Orthotic Care Center recently opened in Sandpoint, offering both pediatric and infant prosthetic and orthotic care as well as preventative diabetic foot care. Owner Kendall Carpenter designs and makes artificial limbs, micro-processor knees, sports bracings and custom diabetic shoes. His wife Gina is trained and certified to fit breast prostheses and post-mastectomy garments. She provides medical-grade, mineral oil-based silicone garments and material for wound management and scar reduction. Their new business means residents do not have to drive hundreds of miles for prosthetic and orthotic fittings.
- Angie's Drive-In recently opened in Priest River. The restaurant sells sandwiches, soups, salads, burritos, wraps and breakfast items.
- Darrin and Brenda Johnston recently opened Johnston Equipment Co., renting backhoes and a wide variety of construction, gardening and forestry equipment. The rental store is located at in Oldtown, a city of 220 residents in the western part of Bonner County.

Kootenai County

- The high-profile Riverstone mixed-use development in Coeur d'Alene recently signed up the Sangria Grille, which is expanding from its original location in Moscow. Serving Peruvian, Mediterranean and American dishes, the 160-seat restaurant will serve lunch and dinner and employ about 50 people.
- A \$12 million, 61,000-square-foot Sportsman's Warehouse is under construction on Government Way in Coeur d'Alene. The retail store sells hunting, fishing and camping equipment and clothing. It will open May 17 and employ 75 people. A new 11,620-square-foot building south of the sporting goods store is ready for tenants. Those expected to open before New Year's are the High Noon restaurant and Odyssey Tek, a Macintosh computer shop.
- J.C. Pet Boutique recently opened in Coeur d'Alene. The store sells groomer-quality shampoos, toys, furniture for cats, collars, organic pet food and other pet supplies. For the well-dressed pet, the store offers a variety of apparel including sweaters, slippers, dresses, pajamas and even Santa suits.
- Studio 107, a jewelry design and art store, plans to open in early December in Coeur d'Alene.

- Hansen's Florists & Gifts recently opened at the Gibbs Center. Among the gift items on sale are balloons, Pilgrim candles and Saltbox cards.
- Fiesta Mexicana, the restaurant that recently opened in Coeur d'Alene, serves authentic Mexican dishes for lunch and dinner. It employs 15 people.

Shoshone County

- Wal-Mart began hiring for its Smelterville supercenter in late October. It plans to hire 100 employees initially and more later to keep the store running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More than 500 people have already submitted applications. The store is designed for easy access by Trail of the Coeur d'Alene riders and will offer bike racks for them. With its location along Interstate 90, Wal-Mart expects to attract customers off of the freeway. The store is slated to open in the last half of January.
- The Wal-Mart supercenter is Shoshone County's first big box store. In 2005, Shoshone County listed only two general merchandise stores, an industrial classification that includes department stores, discount stores, superstores and general stores. Together, they employed fewer than 10 people. The largest, the Fonk's store in Wallace, closed in July. The other one is Scheffy's General Store in Avery, a town of 60 along the St. Joe River in the forests of Shoshone County.

Other retailers in Shoshone County have taken a proactive approach to Wal-Mart's entry. They have been positioning themselves to serve niches Wal-Mart will not be filling and to provide better service and special local knowledge to meet customer needs.

- Yoke's Food Inc. recently purchased Gary's Pharmacy in Pinehurst and moved the pharmacy into the Yoke's grocery store in Kellogg. Yoke's is expanding its produce department, improving its frozen food department, increasing selections and offering seating in its deli, expanding bakery offerings and adding a natural and organic food section.

One thing is certain — Wal-Mart will not take any business away from Shoshone County's largest retailer, Dave Smith Motors, the automotive dealership that employs more than 300 people in Kellogg.

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North Central Idaho News

CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

September's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly from August to 4.8 percent due to early seasonal layoffs in agriculture. Workers in the wheat and barley harvest, who normally work until September, were laid off in August this year because harvest started early and was completed in August. Year over year unemployment was down from last September's rate of 5.3 percent.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Washington's Minimum Wage to Increase

Washington's minimum wage will increase 30 cents to \$7.93 an hour beginning Jan. 1. Washington voters approved an initiative in 1998 that requires the state's minimum wage be adjusted each year in September based on changes in the Consumer Price Index. Washington's minimum wage applies to workers in both agricultural and non-agricultural jobs, although 14- and 15-year-olds may be paid 85 percent of the adult minimum wage. For more information on Washington's minimum wage, log on to the Internet at <http://wages.LNI.wa.gov> and select "Minimum Wage." Employers and workers may also call (360) 902-5316 or toll-free (866) 219-7321 for more information.

North central Idaho employers, especially those in Lewiston and Moscow, keep a close eye on Washington's minimum wage because they compete for the same labor pool. Increases in the minimum wage in Washington usually signal a need to increase entry-level wages in north central Idaho border communities. The Idaho and federal minimum wages are \$5.15 an hour. Democratic leaders in Congress have said they plan to make an increase in the minimum wage a priority when they take control in January. Idaho's history has been to match whatever increases are approved in the federal minimum wage.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- A virtual marketplace has been set up for local producers and artisans

North Central Idaho Table 1: Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,800	28,750	29,550	0.2	-2.5
Unemployment	1,390	1,350	1,560	3.0	-10.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.8	4.7	5.3		
Total Employment	27,410	27,400	27,990	0.0	-2.1
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,170	28,320	28,810	-0.5	-2.2
Unemployment	1,040	1,140	1,170	-8.8	-11.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	4.0	4.1		
Total Employment	27,130	27,180	27,640	-0.2	-1.8
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,940	26,690	27,260	0.9	-1.2
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,490	4,510	4,620	-0.4	-2.8
Natural Resources & Mining	280	260	230	7.7	21.7
Construction	1,250	1,270	1,400	-1.6	-10.7
Manufacturing	2,960	2,980	2,990	-0.7	-1.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	540	550	550	-1.8	-1.8
Food Manufacturing	30	30	30	0.0	0.0
Paper Manufacturing	1,100	1,110	1,110	-0.9	-0.9
Other Manufacturing	1,290	1,290	1,300	0.0	-0.8
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	22,450	22,180	22,640	1.2	-0.8
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,450	5,480	5,440	-0.5	0.2
Wholesale Trade	660	680	680	-2.9	-2.9
Retail Trade	3,460	3,460	3,480	0.0	-0.6
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,240	1,250	1,190	-0.8	4.2
Information	450	450	410	0.0	9.8
Financial Activities	1,840	1,830	1,850	0.5	-0.5
Professional & Business Services	1,580	1,580	1,730	0.0	-8.7
Education & Health Services	4,450	4,400	4,450	1.1	0.0
Leisure & Hospitality	2,430	2,440	2,510	-0.4	-3.2
Other Services	1,100	1,080	1,120	1.9	-1.8
Government Education	2,370	2,180	2,300	8.7	3.0
Government Administration	2,030	1,960	2,080	3.6	-2.4
Government Tribes	750	780	750	-3.8	0.0

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

in Clearwater County and the surrounding region. The marketplace is a Web site, <http://www.inlandnwfarmersmarket.com>, where businesses in the region sell their products such as meat, produce, crafts and books.

- Clearwater County is also promoting the "Gold Rush Artisan Adventure," a driving route that encourages tourists to discover the county's interesting back roads. The route diverts travelers from U.S. Highway 12 at

Orofino, follows the Grangemont Road to Highway 11 and on to Headquarters before doubling back to Pierce and rejoining Highway 12 at Greer. A map detailing artisan shops, ranches, museums, places to stay and community events along the route will be produced to promote the drive. The map will include addresses, hours and contact information for businesses.

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- The Bennett lumber mill in Grangeville, the newest lumber mill in north central Idaho and southeastern Washington, shut down for a week in October, laying off about half of the employees, according to company president Scott Atkison, while the other 70 employees worked on machinery for the week. About 100 contract loggers and truck drivers were also affected by the shutdown. According to Atkinson, the mill has been struggling to sell lumber at a level close to its production.

Mill operators blame a recent agreement between the U.S. and Canada for the slowdown. The Canadian government agreed to tax its producers 15 percent for lumber shipped to the United States if the price fell below \$300 per thousand board feet starting Oct. 1. According to a Bennett company memo, Canadian producers ramped up their shipments to the U.S. before the agreement took effect, which dropped prices as much as 20 percent for some items. In turn, the volume of buying has slowed to a crawl. Other mills are also strained by the conditions. At least 16 mills in the western United States have taken actions that include one-week shutdowns, production reductions and indefinite closures. Executives at Bennett Forest Industries viewed the week-long shutdown as a preventive strategy.

Latah County

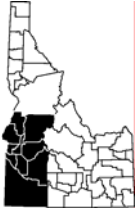
- Latah County commissioners denied Ralph Naylor Farms LLC's request for a conditional use permit to mine sand, gravel and clay on its land north of Moscow. Commissioners said the application did not meet the tenets of the comprehensive plan for the county and the site was too close to Moscow and surrounding residents. The company's plan was to mine in 40-acre sections on 362 acres of land a mile and a half north of Moscow. It would have served as the only local source for sand and gravel needed to make concrete.
- Standing room only at the Kibbie Dome translates into increased business at Moscow and Lewiston hotels, restaurants, bars and other service businesses. The University of Idaho's arena was sold out for the first time in a long time as the resurgent Vandals took the field against the Boise State Broncos in football in October. The feat of selling more than 17,000 seats was spurred initially by the off-season hiring of coaching legend Dennis Erickson, and lately by a winning record, the first in seven years. "Athletic wins equate to fans in the seats, and there's nothing better than that," said Moscow Chamber of Commerce Executive

Director Paul Kimmell. And with an even bigger crowd just eight miles away to watch the Washington State Cougars take on the University of Oregon Ducks, the Palouse was flooded in October with entertainment-hungry fans, buying everything from T-shirts to room service. The consumer crush reached well into the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley. Alyssa Hasenoehrl, general manager of the Lewiston Comfort Inn, said she fielded at least 10 calls a day from people who did not plan ahead and were scrambling to find rooms. Economic studies done by University of Idaho economists have said every visitor during a big game weekend spends between \$100 and \$120 per day.

Nez Perce County

- Making wine has become a small but growing industry in the area. One local wine maker, Merry Cellars, produces a syrah wine. The company's owner and vintner, Patrick Merry started making wine about six years ago as a hobby. He made the leap to producing it commercially in 2004. That same year, Clearwater Canyon Cellars in Lewiston and Camas Prairie Winery in Moscow pressed grapes to make their first batches of wine. And Basalt Cellars and Wawawai Canyon cropped up a little later. The region has six wineries, and most local vintners would like to see the area eventually become a wine-tourism destination. The accumulation of wineries in the area only adds to that potential, said Sue Scott, co-owner of the Camas Prairie Winery. The majority of Idaho's wine has been produced in the southern part of the state. Washington's wine regions are mainly around Yakima, Walla Walla and on the Columbia River. Most of the local vintners work together and help out if someone has a question or needs to borrow equipment. They often place supply orders together to get better prices, Scott said. Industry experts say an area needs at least eight to 10 wineries to draw people. The Palouse is too cold to grow grapes, but the Lewiston/Clarkston area has a favorable growing climate. Lewiston and Clarkston were major grape-growing areas around the turn of the 20th century, but Prohibition wiped those vineyards out, said Karl Umiker, co-owner of Clearwater Canyon Cellars.

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Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area declined for the second straight month, falling to 2.8 percent in September. For four months through July the rate was 3 percent. September's rate was four-tenths of a point lower than a year earlier. A thousand people joined the labor force during the month, and 1,100 more people were working in September than in August. September marks the first time since March that the unemployment rate has been below 3 percent for two or more months, and the rate matches the year's low of 2.8 percent in January.

Total nonfarm jobs increased 1 percent in September, about 2,800, to bring total jobs to 272,800. That is 19,400 more than in September 2005, a 7.7 percent increase. Unlike previous months, construction employment held steady in September as the industry began its return to a more sustainable rate of growth. But it was still more than 10 percent above year-ago levels. September marked the return of kids to school, and that

Southwestern Idaho Table 2: September 2006 Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Figures for Southwestern Idaho Counties

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Percent Unemployed	Number Employed
Ada	198,216	5,060	2.6	193,157
Adams	2,089	150	7.2	1,938
Boise	4,079	114	2.8	3,965
Canyon	82,907	2,850	3.4	80,056
Elmore	11,285	554	4.9	10,730
Gem	7,588	282	3.7	7,306
Owyhee	5,057	139	2.7	4,918
Payette	10,094	630	6.2	9,464
Valley	5,175	205	4.0	4,970
Washington	5,103	270	5.3	4,833
Statewide	762,793	25,466	3.3	737,327

Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)

	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	297,800	296,800	287,800	0.3	3.5
Unemployment	8,400	8,500	9,200	-1.2	-8.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.8	2.9	3.2		
Total Employment	289,400	288,300	278,600	0.4	3.9
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	293,100	296,000	282,200	-1.0	3.9
Unemployment	7,300	7,800	8,000	-6.4	-8.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.5	2.6	2.8		
Total Employment	285,800	288,200	274,200	-0.8	4.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**					
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	55,000	55,000	51,800	0.0	6.2
Natural Resources & Construction					
Construction	24,100	24,100	21,800	0.0	10.6
Manufacturing	23,700	23,700	21,500	0.0	10.2
Durable Goods	30,900	30,900	30,000	0.0	3.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	24,500	24,600	23,800	-0.4	2.9
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	2,600	2,600	2,300	0.0	13.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,500	1,500	1,400	0.0	7.1
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	1,200	1,200	1,200	0.0	0.0
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	14,200	14,200	14,100	0.0	0.7
Other Durable Goods	2,200	2,300	2,200	-4.3	0.0
Nondurable Goods	2,800	2,800	2,600	0.0	7.7
Food Manufacturing	6,400	6,300	6,200	1.6	3.2
Printing & Related Support Activities	4,300	4,300	4,400	0.0	-2.3
Other Nondurable Goods	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	1,400	1,300	1,100	7.7	27.3
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	54,000	53,700	49,900	0.6	8.2
Trade	46,100	45,900	42,700	0.4	8.0
Wholesale Trade	12,600	12,600	11,800	0.0	6.8
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	7,500	7,500	7,100	0.0	5.6
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,800	3,700	3,600	2.7	5.6
Retail Trade	33,500	33,300	30,900	0.6	8.4
Food & Beverage Stores	4,600	4,600	4,500	0.0	2.2
General Merchandise Stores	6,700	6,700	6,200	0.0	8.1
All Other Retail Trade	22,200	22,000	20,200	0.9	9.9
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,900	7,800	7,200	1.3	9.7
Utilities	600	600	600	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	7,300	7,200	6,600	1.4	10.6
Information	5,300	5,400	5,300	-1.9	0.0
Telecommunications	1,400	1,400	2,300	0.0	-39.1
Financial Activities	14,800	14,800	8,800	0.0	68.2
Finance & Insurance	10,200	10,300	4,600	-1.0	121.7
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,600	4,500	4,200	2.2	9.5
Professional & Business Services	39,200	39,300	38,100	-0.3	2.9
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,200	11,300	10,800	-0.9	3.7
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,900	5,900	5,800	0.0	1.7
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	22,100	22,100	21,500	0.0	2.8
Educational & Health Services	32,100	31,700	31,400	1.3	2.2
Educational Services	2,700	2,400	2,700	12.5	0.0
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,400	29,300	28,700	0.3	2.4
Hospitals	9,700	9,700	9,200	0.0	5.4
Leisure & Hospitality	24,000	24,300	22,800	-1.2	5.3
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,800	4,000	3,100	-5.0	22.6
Accommodation & Food Services	20,200	20,300	19,700	-0.5	2.5
Accommodation	2,000	2,000	2,100	0.0	-4.8
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,200	18,300	17,600	-0.5	3.4
Other Services	7,300	7,300	6,200	0.0	17.7
Total Government	41,100	38,500	39,100	6.8	5.1
Federal Government	5,800	5,900	5,900	-1.7	-1.7
State & Local Government	35,300	32,600	33,200	8.3	6.3
State Government	13,600	12,600	13,300	7.9	2.3
State Government Education	4,600	3,700	4,500	24.3	2.2
State Government Administration	9,000	8,900	8,800	1.1	2.3
Local Government	21,700	20,000	19,900	8.5	9.0
Local Government Education	13,800	11,900	12,300	16.0	12.2
Local Government Administration	7,900	8,100	7,600	-2.5	3.9

* Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

boosted education jobs. With schools opening, employment was up in both public and private schools, accounting for the increase in September's nonfarm jobs. The September labor force and total employment figures for all 10 counties in southwestern Idaho are shown in Treasure Valley Table 2 on page 14.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Recruiting Strategies

With the unemployment rate low in southwestern Idaho and employers needing workers with nearly every skill, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit qualified workers. Employers are resorting to a multitude of new strategies to fill payrolls. One has been termed boomerang recruiting, which as its name implies is going after former employees who have moved on. Employers are tracking these workers down and attempting to re-hire them with increased pay and other incentives.

Employers are also trying individualized flexible work schedules if the situation and business allow it. Companies are using various tactics to boost employee morale, and many are using their current employees to help recruit new ones by setting up employee referral programs and giving bonuses or rewards to employees who refer quality candidates. Some employers are even stockpiling talent. If they know they will need certain job skills in a few months but a good candidate is available, they are hiring the worker now, they are hiring them immediately and keeping them busy on other projects until their primary skills are needed.

Because employers are increasingly making counter offers to candidates being pursued by other companies, employers have found it necessary to build and continue relationships with prospective workers until they join the payroll.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Metropolitan Boise

- In addition to the unemployment rate declining for two consecutive months, September marks the second month in a row that the cost of living has declined in the Boise area. According to Wells Fargo, the cost of living declined by 1 percent in September, almost exclusively due to falling fuel prices. Utilities costs also declined in September as clothing, groceries and health care costs went up. The overall decline makes consumer paychecks go a little farther.
- In what will be a boost to the construction industry in southwestern Idaho, the state Transportation Board recently approved seven road construction projects on the freeway between Meridian and Nampa. The seven projects are part of the GARVEE legislation passed two years ago. The timetable for

completing the projects, which include a freeway exit at Ten Mile Road in Meridian and widening both directions to three lanes to Nampa, is 2010.

- St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, one of the region's largest hospitals, has purchased 117 acres in Caldwell across from the Sky Ranch Business Park. With locations in Boise, Meridian and Ketchum, the move westward following population growth will allow St Luke's to more effectively meet the growing need for both inpatient and outpatient health services and give residents more health care options closer to home.
- During September, the median price for homes sold in Ada County was \$240,000, up from \$199,500 one year ago. Canyon County's median price was \$168,000, up significantly from \$134,900 in September 2005. Contradicting the price increases, however, is the fact that the number of homes sold is down 54 from 2005. There were also 195 more homes sold in Canyon County last year. One reason for this decline in the number of sales is a slowdown in the number of new residents from out of state, largely due to the fact that housing markets in places such as California have become so overvalued people with homes for sale either cannot sell them or cannot or will not drop the price. This is not a housing market meltdown but a market playing catch-up to the number of homes that were built so quickly in anticipation of continued in-migration. September sales in Ada County were 1,165, still ahead of 2004's 1,132, further proof that the housing market is returning to more normal levels from consecutive record-setting years.

Valley County

- In the ever growing problem of employers finding enough workers and workers finding affordable housing, the Whitetail Club in McCall has a solution. It invested \$600,000 in a 5,000-square-foot dormitory style facility. Despite the cost, the investment helps ensure the Whitetail Club will have an adequate work force for construction and maintenance projects. Tenants must work at Whitetail and pay \$125 per month rent. In addition to the housing, Whitetail provides lunch for its workers at no charge as well as its employees' work clothes and bedding.
- The city of McCall has begun construction on its first affordable houses. The houses will be 1,100-square-foot modular homes with two to three bedrooms and will sell for approximately \$175,000 each. The properties fall under a deed restriction, which limits the annual appreciation rate to 4 percent in an effort to deter speculative buying.

Elmore County

- The U.S. Air Force is currently negotiating with Singapore to house a squadron of the country's Royal Air Force F-16's at Mountain Home Air Force Base. If the negotiations go as planned, Mountain Home could see the first planes arrive as early as next spring just after the base's own F-16s are moved out.
- The Elmore Medical Center recently purchased land west of the Catholic Diocese for future expansion. It will also help the expansion of the Trinity Mountain Family Practice Clinic.
- The Marathon Cheese facility is nearly complete in Mountain Home. Marathon Cheese is scheduled to take possession of the new 200,000-square-foot facility in December and be up and running a month or two later. Marathon Cheese has hired its plant foreman and is currently hiring for a variety of jobs. New workers will go to Wisconsin for training and then train additional newly hired workers in Mountain Home. Marathon Cheese has indicated that it will be hiring over the next two years.

Adams County

- The city of Council recently joined Adams and Valley counties and the cities of New Meadows, Donnelly, McCall and Cascade in the Valley-Adams Regional Housing Authority. Escalating housing and land prices throughout Valley and Adams counties are preventing families from relocating to Council. The city believes the Housing Authority can help provide opportunities for homeownership for community members unable to afford the expensive land and home prices.

Payette County

- The city of Payette has been offered \$1 million to improve the airport and develop adjacent land. The property next to the airport includes the area around the golf course, which is where a subdivision would most likely be built.

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Idaho's Labor Market Web Site Feature of the Month

A frequent data request at Idaho Commerce & Labor is the **Consumer Price Index**. It is the most widely used measure of inflation and is often referred to as the cost of living index. Monthly indexes are available for two population groups. The CPI-U covers the expenditures of a wide range of urban consumers. The CPI-W covers only the expenditures of urban wages earners and clerical workers. The national CPI-U rate of inflation is typically used in Idaho because it closely represents our cost of living.

The most current CPI, and historic records dating back to 1945, are available on the labor market Web site. Go to <http://lmi.idaho.gov>. Click once on "Income & Wages" on the left side menu bar and reveal the sub-menu. Click on Consumer Price Index which opens the page pictured below. The rest is up to you to follow the information on screen to find what you need. Happy searching!

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The Consumer Price Index is the most widely used measure of inflation and is often referred to as the cost of living index. There are monthly indexes available for two population groups. The CPI-U covers the expenditures of a wide range of urban consumers; the CPI-W covers only the expenditures of urban wages earners and clerical workers. The national CPI-U rate of inflation is typically used in Idaho because it closely represents our cost of living.

Indexes	% Change From				
	Oct-06	Sept-06	Oct-05	Sept-06	Oct-05
U.S. City Average	201.8	202.9	199.2	-0.5%	1.3%

(All Items, Urban Consumers, 1982-84 = 100, Not Seasonally Adjusted)



South Central Idaho News

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

There is no accompanying article about south central Idaho this month.

South Central Idaho Table 1: Twin Falls-Jerome MicSA Labor Force & Employment—Twin Falls and Jerome counties					
	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	51,040	50,720	48,070	0.6	6.2
Unemployment	1,550	1,330	1,590	16.5	-2.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	2.6	3.3		
Total Employment	49,490	49,390	46,480	0.2	6.5
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	51,710	51,490	48,510	0.4	6.6
Unemployment	1,250	1,480	1,290	-15.5	-3.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.4	2.9	2.7		
Total Employment	50,460	50,010	47,220	0.9	6.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	40,110	40,760	38,680	-1.6	3.7
<i>Goods-Providing Industries</i>	7,240	7,670	7,120	-5.6	1.7
Natural Resources & Mining	40	40	30	0.0	33.3
Construction	2,560	2,560	2,160	0.0	18.5
Manufacturing	4,640	5,070	4,930	-8.5	-5.9
<i>Food Manufacturing</i>	2,420	2,880	3,000	-16.0	-19.3
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	2,220	2,190	1,930	1.4	15.0
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	32,870	33,090	31,560	-0.7	4.2
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	10,170	10,250	9,330	-0.8	9.0
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	1,960	1,930	1,780	1.6	10.1
<i>Retail Trade</i>	5,830	5,860	5,540	-0.5	5.2
<i>Utilities</i>	170	170	170	0.0	0.0
<i>Transportation & Warehousing</i>	2,210	2,290	1,840	-3.5	20.1
Information	610	610	590	0.0	3.4
Financial Activities	1,770	1,730	1,660	2.3	6.6
Professional & Business Services	5,120	5,400	5,220	-5.2	-1.9
Educational & Health Services	3,600	3,580	3,340	0.6	7.8
Leisure & Hospitality	3,430	3,410	3,190	0.6	7.5
Other Services	1,480	1,490	1,400	-0.7	5.7
Government Education	2,640	2,580	2,950	2.3	-10.5
Government Administration	4,050	4,050	3,880	0.0	4.4
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					



Southeastern Idaho News

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA & POWER COUNTIES

WELCOME SCOTT HOBDEY

This month's article about southeastern Idaho comes from Scott Hobdey, the new regional economist for southeastern Idaho. He is a veteran Idaho Commerce & Labor unemployment insurance tax representative with 18 years experience in the department's Unemployment Insurance Division, stationed in Pocatello.

Before that, he was a cost accountant for the J.R. Simplot Co. in southeastern Idaho and then an assistant athletic director at Idaho State University.

An Army veteran, Hobdey has a master's degree in business administration from Idaho State University.

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ECONOMIC TRENDS

The labor force and total employment remain in sync for the Pocatello metropolitan area. The rate of unemployment in September was about the same as last year as the number of jobs gradually increased in line with the number of workers looking for jobs. The drop in metropolitan unemployment rate from 4.1 percent in August to 3.7 percent in September occurred as a large food manufacturer resumed operations after a maintenance shutdown and a call center increased its number of employees. Nearly 300 manufacturing jobs in the area were more precisely identified in the latest report, separating them into durable and nondurable sectors. That will permit better tracking and assessment of manufacturing in the region as it evolves. Manufacturing jobs, typically higher paying than service-sector jobs, are in high demand, and it is not likely that there will be a decrease in the overall manufacturing occupations in the near term. The decline in government jobs in education reflects the publicized reduction in students and, subsequently, staff at the area's secondary schools. The enrollment decline at Idaho State University – a re-

Southeastern Idaho Table 1: Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change From Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	46,180	45,950	45,460	0.5	1.6
Unemployment	1,700	1,870	1,670	-9.1	1.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	4.1	3.7		
Total Employment	44,480	44,080	43,790	0.9	1.6
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	45,570	44,630	44,710	2.1	1.9
Unemployment	1,410	1,720	1,380	-18.0	2.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.1	3.9	3.1		
Total Employment	44,160	42,910	43,330	2.9	1.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	40,520	39,280	39,500	3.2	2.6
Goods-Producing Industries	6,160	6,170	5,810	-0.2	6.0
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	30	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,740	2,770	2,390	-1.1	14.6
Manufacturing	3,390	3,370	3,390	0.6	0.0
Food Manufacturing	1,120	1,000	980	12.0	14.3
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	170	160	150	6.3	13.3
Machinery Manufacturing	220	230	90	-4.3	144.4
Other Manufacturing	1,880	1,980	2,170	-5.1	-13.4
Service-Providing Industries	34,360	33,110	33,690	3.8	2.0
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,650	7,660	7,450	-0.1	2.7
Wholesale Trade	1,390	1,390	1,340	0.0	3.7
Retail Trade	4,780	4,790	4,640	-0.2	3.0
Utilities	40	50	50	-20.0	-20.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,440	1,430	1,420	0.7	1.4
Information	760	770	770	-1.3	-1.3
Financial Activities	2,160	2,140	2,110	0.9	2.4
Professional & Business Services	5,210	5,090	4,890	2.4	6.5
Educational & Health Services	3,470	3,410	3,350	1.8	3.6
Leisure & Hospitality	3,430	3,460	3,480	-0.9	-1.4
Other Services	1,230	1,220	1,190	0.8	3.4
Government Education	5,750	4,100	5,910	40.2	-2.7
Government Administration	4,700	5,260	4,540	-10.6	3.5

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

sponse to the strong employment market throughout much of Idaho – has not affected positions at the school yet but may in the future, depending on the Legislature's response to that and other developments.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Promoting a Healthy Work Force

Most employers thinking about relocating to southeastern Idaho have done their due diligence and recognize the high quality of the area's work force, and part of that reflects worker health. A healthy work force directly impacts an employer's cost of operations because there is less absenteeism, better decisions on the job, better time management, lower training cost because turnover is reduced and possibly lower insur-

ance premiums for both the employer and employee. Indirectly the employer and workers also benefit from good health because it fosters a positive outlook on life and increased job satisfaction.

Good health is important to the residents of southeastern Idaho, reflected in the many opportunities for free or reduced-fee health services and education. Each week there are features in every local newspaper and on radio and television informing consumers and workers of health issues and the importance of maintaining good health. Many pharmacies and local health care facilities offer reduced-cost screening for diabetes, blood pressure reading and wellness counseling. Health fairs offering reduced-price cholesterol screening and body fat measurements are being sponsored nearly every week in some part of the area. Idaho State University continues to offer many opportunities for the public to hear from nationally recognized speakers about current health concerns and developments.

The employer community is also concerned about having a healthy work force and has been offering more in terms of health insurance. A 2005 study of fringe benefits offered by Idaho employers found about three of every four employees in professional services, manufacturing, public administration, utilities, education, real estate and mining had access to health plans. In a second tier, over half the employees in finance, transportation, health and social services, construction, information and other services were offered coverage.

There is a healthy work force in Idaho, and the health care providers and communities in this area are working hard to make sure it stays that way.

COUNTY NEWS

Franklin County

- The Cache Valley Transit Bus system began operation this month, funded primarily by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. It is an experiment in reducing air pollution in the valley believed to be caused largely by approximately 1,700 cars traveling back and forth across the Utah border each day. There will be two buses making trips from the Preston area to Logan area each morning and returning from Logan each evening.
- Residents were saddened by the closing of the Grand Theater and Cultural Arts Center. The facility is owned by the county and is more commonly known as the Worm Creek Opera House. It has served the residents of the area for several generations, but recent concerns about safety and needed repairs led to the decision to close the facility until a solution is found. The County Commission and the Theater Arts Council have been discussing the cost. There appears to be agreement on the need for repairs but

not on how to pay for them. Estimates of the cost for restoration range from \$15,000 to \$200,000.

- Dr. Rex Wortham closed his medical practice at the end of September. Franklin County Medical Center administrators began an immediate search for a replacement, hoping that medical staff from Pocatello and Logan can fill the void until a new physician is hired.
- Twenty-eight building permits were issued in Franklin County during the first six months of the year compared to 29 issued during the same period last year. But while the permits were evenly divided between the city of Preston and the rest of the county last year, only a third of them this year have been in the city.
- Two new area businesses opened in October. The Antique Mall just off Highway 91 is home to a new restaurant operated by Evey Storts. Off the Trax features Italian cuisine and is open six days a week. Daniel Baker began a new investment business, Edward Jones Investments.

Bingham and Power Counties

- Bingham County commissioners deliberated for three hours before awarding Rulon Jones, former NFL standout, a special use permit to operate a shooter bull elk range. The permit is conditional and requires Jones to build a double fence around the property and comply with other safety requirements. Shooter bull operations are a point of controversy, but there is no debate that they will generate money in the county and local area. Most hunts will involve flights into the area and overnight stays for several individuals.
- A new mortgage business opened in downtown Blackfoot. Hometown Mortgage is owned by Troy Eppich. It offers a variety of financing products including 100 percent investment property loans.
- Kaylynn Gorder opened the Downtown Bread Co. in Blackfoot and is selling 90 to 100 loaves a day in addition to sandwiches, soups, salads and sweets.
- Bingham Coop office staff moved into their new 4000-square-foot office, expanding to handle a new customer base. Chief Executive Officer Mike Dance recognized the need to serve a more urban customer in addition to the strong base of farmers and ranchers Bingham Coop has always served.
- University of Idaho Research and Extension soil scientist Pamela Hutchinson conducted a tour of a five-acre green-manure field trial on the Fort Hall Reservation. These trial plots were planted after the harvest of summer grown crops with quick growing

green-manure crops including mustards, oilseed radish and arugula. The crops were chopped and tilled back into the soil to improve the physical, chemical and biological properties of each test plot. It is also hoped that this method of renewing the soils will reduce pest and insect problems in subsequent year's potato crops.

- Local accountant Dallas Clinger has assumed the duties as chief executive of Harms Memorial Hospital in American Falls. Clinger, a lifelong resident of Power County, wants the hospital to be financially sound as it grows to meet community needs.
- The city of Aberdeen thrives during the busy harvest time, but city leaders are concerned about safety and road conditions with more than 15,000 trucks traveling through the city between September and January. The city was awarded a \$45,000 grant for Idaho Department of Transportation to study the situation.
- Fall harvest has gone as well as can be expected. Soft white wheat is about \$4 a bushel and hard wheat is averaging well above \$5 a bushel. It is expected that potato prices will hold above \$5 a hundred pounds this fall. Most of the harvest is complete, and there were very few weather delays until moisture at the end of October slowed the final days of field work

Bear Lake and Caribou Counties

- Work has started on an eight-to-12 home subdivision north of Montpelier. The property was recently annexed by the city and will be the site for an affordable housing project promoted by Southeastern Idaho Community Action Agency and the city of Montpelier. Home buyers in this subdivision may be able to work off part of the construction costs and in the process build equity and pride of home ownership.
- Funding of the Bear Lake/Oregon Trail Scenic Byway Management Plan remains an issue, and more studies will be done before any funding is committed by anyone. Dave Grierson of the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands emphasized the importance of working together to develop a single management plan for lake use and maintenance.
- Quest Communications has announced that high-speed Internet service is now available in Soda Springs. The high-speed access is up to 89 times faster than dial-up. The company believes high-speed access will encourage more customers to subscribe.
- The Soda Springs Chamber of Commerce welcomed a new business to the community. Herbal Lounge, owned by Michael and Paulette Anderson, special-

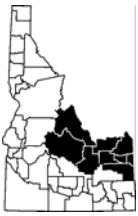
izes in herbal drinks, teas and espresso as well as traditional drinks such as milkshakes, malts and smoothies. The business offers a wide range of free classes to the community as well as free math, physics and chemistry tutoring.

- Monsanto's Soda Springs phosphorus manufacturing plant was recognized for his environmental land restoration by Tony Hardesty, director of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, on behalf of the six federal and state agencies most responsible for protecting the environment.

Bannock County

- Portneuf Medical Center's Heart and Vascular Center received the top marks in Idaho from Health-Grades, an organization that conducts an annual evaluation of 5,000 hospitals in the United States. The center was praised for its interventional program, which includes angioplasty and the use of stents to alleviate blockages.
- To expedite construction of a new hospital, Portneuf Medical Center executives agreed to sell a long-term care unit to California-based Ensign Group. The sale will shorten construction time by nearly three years because of improved profitability and increased ability to issue bonds.
- The city of Pocatello is pursuing foreign trade zone designations for several areas. Companies operating in a foreign trade zone are granted relief on tariffs charges and may defer payment of duty charges until the end product is sent to market. Additionally, companies that import raw goods and ship finished products overseas can bypass paying duties entirely.
- Local mayors, legislators and community leaders celebrated AMI Semiconductor's 40th anniversary and 36 years in Pocatello. President Christine King touted the company's workers as its most valuable asset. She reinforced the notion of a strong work ethic and company loyalty by recognizing that 25 percent of the AMI's employees have worked at the facility for at least 20 years.
- American Out Buildings is a new company filling a demand for functional, quality sheds and outbuildings. The business is owned by Jude Walsh and Mike Gunn and is located in Pocatello.

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East Central Idaho News

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The unemployment rate of the Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area increased one-tenth of a percentage point over the month to 2.3 percent as seen in East Central Idaho Table 1. While the number of unemployed rose by almost 300, mostly due to declines in construction-related and tourism-related jobs, the civilian labor force grew by almost 400. Year-over-year, the rate decreased two-tenths of a percentage point while the civilian labor force showed an increase of 1,050. Keeping the rate low were more service sector jobs, mostly in retail stores, wholesale facilities, health care and local government. Many of these jobs are a response to population growth. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the area, posted a 2.5 percent unemployment rate, unchanged from the previous month and down two-tenths of a percentage point from the same time last year.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- The new Olive Garden in Idaho Falls opens in early December for dinner and Dec. 11 for both lunch and dinner. Manager James Grider has 18 years of restaurant experience, more than six with Olive Garden. The Idaho Falls Olive Garden employs over 150 workers and seats almost 250 people. Designed as a Tuscan farmhouse, the restaurant offers a new menu revamped this summer. Darden Restaurants Inc. now has nearly 600 Olive Gardens employing over 70,000 people.
- Nick Free recently opened Nick's Reptile Haven in Idaho Falls. Since Free could not give up his hobby of rescuing abandoned reptiles and finding them good homes, he decided to make some money at what he loves. He now has more than 100 reptiles for sale including alligators, pythons and geckos. The store is open Monday through Saturday.

East Central Idaho Table 1: Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	Sep 2006*	Aug 2006	Sep 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	60,940	60,560	59,890	0.6	1.8
Unemployment	1,430	1,340	1,520	6.7	-5.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.3%	2.2%	2.5%		
Total Employment	59,520	59,230	58,370	0.5	2.0
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	61,570	61,970	60,310	-0.6	2.1
Unemployment	1,420	1,470	1,520	-3.4	-6.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.3%	2.4%	2.5%		
Total Employment	60,150	60,500	58,790	-0.6	2.3
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	54,910	54,790	53,170	0.2	3.3
Goods-Producing Industries	7,810	7,940	7,420	-1.6	5.3
Natural Resources & Mining	10	10	70	0.0	-85.7
Construction	4,520	4,630	4,150	-2.4	8.9
Manufacturing	3,280	3,300	3,190	-0.6	2.8
Food Manufacturing	920	930	930	-1.1	-1.1
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	260	270	230	-3.7	13.0
Machinery Manufacturing	170	160	160	6.3	6.3
Other Manufacturing	1,930	1,940	1,870	-0.5	3.2
Service-Providing Industries	47,100	46,850	45,750	0.5	3.0
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	13,610	13,680	13,060	-0.5	4.2
Wholesale Trade	4,270	4,330	4,050	-1.4	5.4
Retail Trade	7,600	7,630	7,340	-0.4	3.5
Utilities	60	70	60	-14.3	0.0
Transportation	1,680	1,650	1,610	1.8	4.3
Information	1,200	1,210	1,010	-0.8	18.8
Financial Activities	2,120	2,140	2,110	-0.9	0.5
Professional & Business Services	9,640	9,710	9,610	-0.7	0.3
Educational & Health Services	7,150	7,120	6,810	0.4	5.0
Leisure & Hospitality	4,570	4,740	4,500	-3.6	1.6
Other Services	2,010	2,060	1,970	-2.4	2.0
Government Education	3,160	2,620	3,300	20.6	-4.2
Government Administration	3,640	3,570	3,380	2.0	7.7

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

- Kathy's Hallmark is closing in Idaho Falls this January so that Ivan and Kathryn Burden can retire. They started their business almost 50 years ago as B&B Drug, but sold the pharmacy in 1979. They have concentrated on the gift business since then.
- Yummy's, a downtown Idaho Falls restaurant for 20 years has closed. The building was sold and will be converted into office space. However, Yummy's will still make food out of a location on Second Street and run its catering truck.

- Anna's Pantry, a home kitchen supply store, just opened in downtown Idaho Falls in the location of the former Paper Bag Princess. Owner Chris Miller carries brand-name kitchenware such as Xliss, Progressive and Emil Henry. She also has a great selection of candles and gifts — just in time for the holidays.
- Elite Entertainment, a modeling and talent agency, moved from central Idaho Falls to Ammon's Eagle Pines Plaza. The owners have experience with clients such as ABC, NBC, CBS, Disney, Warner Brothers, Fox and LDS Casting and help find people for auditions and other venues to display their talents.
- Westgate Drug recently opened in Idaho Falls. It is owned by Corey and Drew Smith, sons of Eastgate Drug founder Doug Smith. In addition to drugs, the store offers a large selection of religious and secular art and home medical supplies and equipment.

Fremont County

- The St. Anthony City Council voted to transform 11 acres of unused gravel pits along U.S. Highway 20 into a sports complex that will include fields for soccer, baseball and other activities. Once started, the complex will take five years to complete. The site needs at least a foot of topsoil and a sprinkler system for starters. The total cost has yet to be determined. Private donors have already contributed \$8,000. The South Fremont Youth Soccer Association has over 400 enrolled in soccer and has offered labor to prepare the fields on top of the \$2,000 it has already donated.

- The Independent Order of Odd Fellows recently sold its St. Anthony building to Paul Allen, owner of Falls Drug, which is on the ground floor of the building. He has no plans yet for the second story where the Odd Fellows met. Declining membership prompted sale of the building. The Odd Fellows once claimed 70 members but now have fewer than the number needed to hold meetings.

Madison County

- A new craft store opened in Rexburg. Scrap-A-Doodle, run by Angelique and Robert Smith, offers craft items, especially for scrapbooks. It offers beginning scrapbook classes on Thursday nights.
- A new newspaper is hitting the streets in Rexburg. The Voice has been in circulation for a month. Independently operated and funded by three Brigham Young University-Idaho students, the paper emphasizes so-called soft news and stories interesting to students. It has no distribution racks on campus so the university is not involved in any way. The free publication is financed through advertising. The paper is designed to literally be a voice for the students, and freelance writing is accepted. The creators of the full-color, bimonthly paper hope others will keep it running after they graduate and are preparing a manual for their successors.

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Education & Training Pay Poster Released

Posters comparing level of pay with level of training are available free from Idaho Commerce & Labor. An 8 1/2" x 11" size can be downloaded and printed from the Web site in PDF format. Just log onto <http://lmi.idaho.gov> and scroll down the home page until you see the poster (pictured on the right) in color. Follow the information on-screen to print the poster.

A larger size, 11" x 17", is also available upon request. The posters have been popular with schools and other career counseling agencies. Log on to the Web site for more information.

IDAHO'S ECONOMIC MIX CHANGES IN STRONG RECESSIONARY RECOVERY

Idaho's recovery from the 2001-2002 national recession has been broad-based, building on the diversity that gave the state economy so much vitality and resilience during the 1990s.

A combination of persistent and dramatic population growth, the resurgence of the international computer chip market and an intensified campaign to recruit new businesses and help existing ones keep going and expand has put Idaho among the national leaders in economic growth.

Whether the measure is job creation or the value of production, Idaho is among the national leaders in the years since the recession.

From 2002 to 2005, gross state product, the value of all goods and services produced in Idaho, was up 29 percent, 10 points higher than growth nationally to rank sixth among the states. Only Wyoming, Nevada, Alaska, New Mexico and Florida were higher.

The figures underscore the change in Idaho's economic mix. All industry sectors exceeded the national growth rate except those linked to natural resources, the one-time cornerstone of the state economy. Management services in Idaho also lagged the national rate, and entertainment and recreation was essentially stagnant, a fallout from the national downturn, security concerns and more recently higher fuel prices.

Between September 2002 and this past September, the number of nonfarm jobs in Idaho jumped nearly 13 percent, the fourth largest increase behind Nevada, Arizona and Utah. It was three times the growth nationwide.

Again, the percentage growth in every sector in Idaho exceeded the national rate except in natural resources, where Idaho grew only half as fast as the nation.

Those 74,000 new jobs and over \$10 billion in higher productivity were spread across the entire economy, and unlike many other states it was the private sector — not government — that drove Idaho's growth.

While 18 other states saw the share of their gross state product from private industry drop or remain unchanged in the years following the recession, the value of Idaho's private sector production increased. With over two-thirds of the state in government ownership, Idaho has always had a comparatively large federal, state and local government labor force contributing to gross state product. But even so, the private sector's share of the gross state product rose from 85.1 percent in 2002 to

86.4 percent in 2005. Only three other states — Alaska, New Mexico and Wyoming — posted larger increases.

FYI Table 1: Idaho, U.S. Gross State Product
Percentage Growth, 2002-2005

Sector	Idaho	U.S.
Total Gross Domestic Product	28.75%	19.34%
Private industries	30.76%	19.75%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	10.56%	24.75%
Mining	70.59%	100.47%
Utilities	21.96%	15.23%
Construction	32.53%	23.07%
Manufacturing	42.99%	10.64%
Durable goods	71.64%	12.09%
Nondurable goods	-9.44%	8.70%
Wholesale trade	28.58%	19.13%
Retail trade	31.22%	15.16%
Transportation and warehousing, excluding Postal Service	23.13%	18.94%
Information	53.65%	19.74%
Finance and insurance	47.67%	22.95%
Real estate, rental and leasing	28.48%	18.47%
Professional and technical services	30.19%	22.28%
Management of companies and enterprises	13.22%	25.48%
Administrative and waste services	42.02%	25.19%
Educational services	25.96%	21.24%
Health care and social assistance	24.62%	22.38%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.33%	15.17%
Accommodation and food services	24.63%	21.08%
Other services, except government	22.01%	16.67%
Government	17.29%	16.38%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

The percentage increase in the value of Idaho's retail, information and administrative services sectors was higher since the recession than for any other state, a response to the state's rapid population growth. The state's population has increased more than twice as fast as the national population since the 2000 census. Only Florida, Arizona, Nevada, Georgia and Utah can also say that.

Construction expansion has been a driving force behind the state's economic growth. Construction values exceeded \$4 billion statewide for the first time in 2005 as the rising population demands more housing and services, and the value of work through the first half of 2006 was running ahead of the 2005 pace.

FYI Table 2: Nonfarm Job Growth in Idaho, U.S., 2002-2006

Sector	Idaho	U.S.
Total	12.8%	4.2%
Private Industry	14.9%	4.5%
Natural Resources	9.3%	18.2%
Construction	44.7%	11.5%
Manufacturing	-1.1%	-7.1%
Trade, transportation, utilities	10.2%	2.2%
Information	28.4%	-9.8%
Financial activities	24.1%	6.6%
Professional and business services	17.3%	9.3%
Education and health services	17.7%	10.3%
Leisure and hospitality	12.8%	9.8%
Other services	9.4%	1.0%
Government	3.8%	2.6%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The financial and real estate sectors followed the lead of construction, posting post-recession growth rates ahead of every other state but Nevada and Florida.

Growth in value from the professional and educational services sectors ranked in the top 10 among the states as did the hotel and restaurant sector, a key part of the state's tourism industry.

But a major contributor to Idaho's strong performance over the past four years has been the revival of the manufacturing sector, a comparatively small piece of the economic equation but one that generally provides higher-paying jobs with good benefits.

The value of manufacturing in Idaho jumped 43 percent since the national recession, solely on the strength of the production of durable goods, those that last at least three years.

The loss of meat packers and food processors across much of southern Idaho has put nondurable manufacturing into a tailspin. A sector that accounted for nearly 7 percent of gross state product and employed nearly 26,000 before the recession today accounts for less than 3 percent and employs fewer than 23,000

But that steady decline is being more than offset by a reinvigorated international computer chip market that has driven up prices for export companies like Micron

Technology and AMI Semiconductor and by the advent of product makers like Buck Knives, Jayco, Kiefer Built and Dutchman to name just a few.

Although still short of its strength prior to the recession, durable manufacturing is expanding again from the tough time during and more than a year after the recession. Idaho's durable manufacturing sector has been the leader in the region and second only to New Mexico nationwide.

Manufacturing peaked in terms of employment and contribution to the gross state product just prior the recession.

It provided 16.3 percent of gross state product in 2000, and in March 2001 as the first signs of the downturn were being recognized, Idaho's manufacturing payroll covered 70,500 workers, 12.5 percent of all nonfarm jobs, and totaled \$1.94 billion on an annualized basis. That was an average of about \$529 a week.

In 2002 and 2003, the sector plunged to just 12 percent of the gross state product, a 25 percent decline. Durables slipped below 8 percent and nondurables dropped to just about 4 percent.

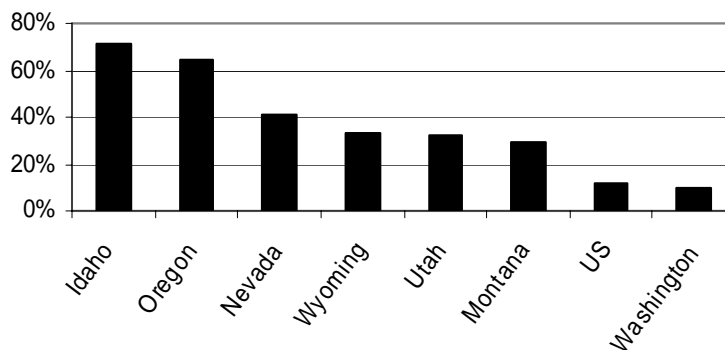
The manufacturing payroll bottomed out in late 2003 at 61,000, 10.5 percent of all nonfarm jobs, and barely \$1.8 billion in wages, annualized. Over 9,000 fewer workers were making only \$36 a week more – about \$565 on average.

By 2005, manufacturing overall had recovered to account for 13.4 percent of Idaho's gross state product. By contrast, manufacturing nationally, which had dropped from 14.6 percent in 2000 to 13 percent during the recession, kept falling to just 12 percent of gross domestic product in 2005.

Idaho's manufacturing payroll was expanding

again, and wages were rising significantly. This summer, there were nearly 64,500 manufacturing workers in Idaho, still 10 percent of the nonfarm jobs, and they were making \$2.38 billion on an annualized basis – an average of over \$710 a week.

FYI Chart 1: Durable Manufacturing Growth, 2002-2005



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Glossary of Labor Market Terms

Agriculture Employment: Persons on agriculture payrolls who work or receive pay for any period during the survey week. This includes owners, operators, unpaid family members who work at least 15 hours a week, and hired laborers.

Average Hourly Earnings/Average Weekly Hours: The average total money earnings earned by production or non-supervisory workers for selected industries. The average number of hours worked by production or non-supervisory workers including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave. The data is collected for the week including the 12th of the month.

Average Weekly Earnings: Average Hourly Earnings multiplied by Average Weekly Hours.

Civilian Labor Force: A count of non-institutional persons 16 years of age and over residing within a specific geographic area, excluding members of armed forces, who are classified as employed, unemployed and seeking employment, or involved in a labor dispute.

Consumer Price Index (CPI): A national index measuring changes over time in the price of a fixed market basket of goods and services. There are two indexes—the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) represents the buying habits of about 80 percent of the non-institutional population of the United States, and the Urban Wage & Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents 40 percent of the population.

Covered Employers: Employers who are subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance laws.

Durable Goods: Also known as “hard goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers with a normal life expectancy of three years or more.

Employed: Individuals, 16 years of age or older, who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit or worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business during the week including the 12th day of the month. Individuals are also counted as employed if they had a job but did not work because they were: ill, on vacation, in a labor dispute, prevented from working because of bad weather, or temporarily absent for similar reasons.

Initial Claim: Any notice of unemployment filed to request (1) a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) a second or subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA): Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in an urban center of 50,000 or more and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MSAs. Idaho has five MSAs: Boise MSA including Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties; Bonneville MSA including Bonneville and Jefferson counties; Pocatello MSA including Bannock and Power counties; Lewiston MSA including Nez Perce County and Asotin County, Wash.; Coeur d’Alene MSA including Kootenai, Boundary, Bonner, Benewah and Shoshone counties.

Micropolitan Statistical Area (MicSA): Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in urban

centers totaling at least 10,000—or 5,000 living in a single urban center—and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MicSAs. Idaho has three MicSAs: Burley MicSA including Cassia and Minidoka counties; Rexburg MicSA including Madison and Fremont counties; Twin Falls MicSA including Twin Falls and Jerome counties.

Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment: Persons on nonfarm establishment payrolls (including employees on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation) who work or receive pay for any part of the week including the 12th of the month. It is a count of jobs by place of work. It does not include self-employed, unpaid volunteer or family workers, domestic workers in households, military personnel and persons who are laid off, on leave without pay, or on strike for the entire reference period.

Nondurable Goods: Also known as “soft goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers that generally last for only a short period of time (three years or less).

Seasonally Adjusted: Data is seasonally adjusted to remove the impact of regular events that occur at the same time every year such as the effect of cold weather on outdoor activities, the Christmas holiday, or the summer influx of youth into the labor market.

Small Labor Market Areas (SLMA): Combinations of counties with significant ties through commuting patterns but no urban centers with populations of 10,000 or more. The Office of Management and Budget designates the SLMAs. Idaho has two SLMAs: Hailey SLMA including Blaine and Camas counties; Grangeville SLMA including Lewis and Idaho counties.

Unemployed: Those individuals, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work during the week including the 12th of the month. The only exceptions to these criteria are individuals who are waiting to be recalled from a layoff and individuals waiting to report to a new job within 30 days—these, too, are considered unemployed.

Unemployment Insurance: Unemployment Insurance is a program for the accumulation of funds paid by employers, to be used for the payment of Unemployment Insurance to workers during periods of unemployment which are beyond their control.

Unemployment Rate: The number of persons unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

Weekly Benefit Amount: The amount payable to a claimant for a compensable week of total unemployment.

Weeks Claimed: The number of weeks that unemployed workers claimed Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Weeks Compensated: The number of weeks for which compensation was actually paid.